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Lastly, it may be noted that the popular pronunciation of *re+s+vowel* (= *res*) has apparently invaded the territory of the vowel in closed syllable, in *restagnation*, *restipuler*. The further examples given by the author—*resceller* and *rescousse* (ɛ, ɛ) are only apparent exceptions to the rule of *ɛ* in closed syllable. In *resceller*, *sc=s*, the syllable is not closed, and the case does not differ from those in the last paragraph. *Rescinder* and derivatives are rather to be adduced as exceptional, as we should expect *ɛ*. *Rescousse* (*rɛk-* and *rɛsk-*) is an apparent exception only, as we have *ɛ* only when *s* is silent; when *s* is heard, *ɛ* regularly appears.

It is unfortunate that what is perhaps the latest utterance on this subject—that of Koschwitz, in his 'Grammatik der Neuf Französischen Schriftsprache,' i. (Berlin: 1889)—should be so expressed as to be misleading in at least two respects. He says (p. 25):

"Nach ihnen [that is, Old French *des, res, tres* before Cons.] richteten sich *dés* vor Vokal, und *dé, ré* die im Laufe der Zeit immer mehr altem *de, re* mit dumpfem *e* Konkurrenz machen, in Neubildungen mit *de* fast ausschliesslich herrschen, und auch bei *re*, wenn es nicht iterativ gesetzt wird."

The very natural interpretation of this sentence, namely, that *ré-* is used in new formations at the present day (*Neubildungen*) except when the particle is iterative, in which case *re-* is used—would be wrong in view of the facts. In the present literary usage *re-* may be prefixed with iterative force to any verb whose action is capable of repetition; in these cases the form *re-* is used (except before vowels): *redéployer*, *redébattre*, *recarboniser*, etc. As seen above, new (literary) compounds with a *simplex* beginning with a vowel, the form *ré-* is used, and here, again, the prefix is purely iterative. Outside of these cases, new compounds with *ré-* are extremely rare, and the accent is usually traceable to related forms, as *réflecter* made from *réflecteur* (Littré: 'Supplément').

Prof. Koschwitz evidently intended to restate Sohrauer's principle that the form *ré-* had a strong life during the period of enrichment and may be expected in words of learned origin, while *re-*, oftenest with iterative force, is to be expected in words of popular origin.

But it must be noted that in the popular speech *re-* has been used as a prefix with no less than six different significations besides that of iteration (*nicht iterativ*), usages which have left numerous and important traces in the language.⁹ To cite examples of only one of these, that of compounds in which the prefix apparently adds nothing to the meaning of the *simplex*: *remercier*, *reluquer*, *renifler*, *remonter*; and *receler*, *reconforter*, *remontre*, given by Thierry (1564).¹⁰

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THE PLAY OF THE WEAVERS OF COVENTRY.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—I have read with great interest a notice by Prof. Davidson, in the March issue of MOD. LANG. NOTES, in which he calls attention to the fact that certain parts of the play of the Weavers of Coventry and of the twentieth York play are the same. This is but another of a number of similar instances made known of late years which prove that the Old English Mystery Plays we possess did not all originate independently, but that comparatively many of them, either as a whole or in part, were imitated or copied from some of the others. As an accurate knowledge of the extent and character of these relations is important for the determination of the origin and development of the religious drama in England, every new instance of this kind must needs be of great interest to students of this special subject.

For this reason I hope that Prof. Davidson will not content himself with so brief a notice of his discovery. Further details are especially desirable in this case; for as far as my knowledge and experience go, it is not very easy to get access to copies of the Weavers' play. This play was privately printed in 1846 in Edinburgh for the Abbotsford Club, and I did not succeed, for instance, in tracing a

⁹ Darmesteter, 'Formation,' p. 99; 'Création,' p. 141; Agmel, op. cit.

¹⁰ Quoted by Darmst., 'Formation,' p. 97.

single copy of it in Germany. There is a copy of it in the British Museum (press-mark: Ac 8247 2), and while in London some three years ago, I began copying it with a view of comparing it with the other extant plays on the same subject, but as my time was very limited, and as the play turned out to be much longer than I had expected (about 1250 lines), I could copy only a very small portion of it, not including the part Prof. Davidson refers to.

I compared, however, the whole play with the corresponding two plays, xviii ("Purification") and xx ("Christ Disputing in the Temple,"), of the 'Ludus Coventriae'—of which the Weavers' play does not form a part—and can say that they are entirely independent of one another.

If on the other hand, as Prof. Davidson has found, parts of the Weavers' play agree with parts of the twentieth York play, the question as to their mutual relation may easily become more complicated than it might seem to be at first sight; for some portions of the York play occur almost word for word in the corresponding plays, both of the Towneley and of the Chester collections, as I have shown in *Anglia*, vol. xi, p. 260 ff. In case these parts should happen to be the same as the "sixteen stanzas of the York play," mentioned by Prof. Davidson, there would be no less than four parallel versions of the same original play or part of a play; and even if we take it for granted that the York play in its primitive form was the original version, the question remains to be answered whether the other three were directly taken from the York play, or partly from each other.

Furthermore, in carefully reading the Weavers' play, my attention was especially attracted, in the part preceding the "Presentation in the Temple" proper, by two scenes between Mary and Joseph, very similar to each other. Both of these scenes represent husband and wife as indulging in one of those conjugal quarrels so common on the medieval stage, and in both instances Joseph addresses the audience, complaining of the trials of married life and pronouncing happy those that have been wise enough to remain single. These scenes seemed to me, at the time, to agree very closely with a similar one in one of the plays of either

York, Chester, or Towneley, but I was unable to carry the investigation any further, and am now not in possession of all the necessary material for taking it up again.

In short, it seems to me that the relations of the Weavers' play to the twentieth York play, and possibly to the other plays on the same subject (with exception, however, of Coventry xviii and xx), are important enough to warrant a more detailed investigation; while on the other hand, the interesting notice of Prof. Davidson will be of but little profit to most scholars, unless at least the corresponding parts of the two plays be printed. My object then in writing these lines is to call attention to these two circumstances, and I hope that either Prof. Davidson or some one else who has access to the Abbotsford Club print of the Weavers' play, will soon give us the needed details.

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ANGLO-SAXON PHONOLOGY.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES:

SIRS:—Permit me a few words suggested by the remarks of Professor Hempl in MOD. LANG. NOTES, vii, 251. It is well known that initial *h* was very weak in the North, and so might not possess consonantal value when brought into the medial position as proposed. But how much stronger was it in Mercian?

Compare with the list given by Bouterwek (p. cxl), and with Lindelöf ('Sprache d. Rit. v. Durham,' §44; s. also the *Nation*, lii, 72) the following words which occur in R¹:

Initial *h* is wanting in: *is* (ejus) 7. 24; 22. 24; 24. 46; *us* 17. 25; *eard* 25. 24; *eorta* 6. 21; *-um* 18. 35; *eora* 6. 15 etc. (9); *eo* (hēo) 16. 18; *æfdon* 8. 33; *æfð* 13. 12; (cf. *æbbe*, Charters 48. 19); *ge-yrdon* 19. 25; *yngrade* 25. 35; (of less significance, the foreign words *erodes* 2. 1; *ymne* 26. 30).

Inorganic *h* appears in: *heow* (vobis) 6. 14; *hōehtnisse* 5. 10 *hoehtende* 5. 12; *hehtende* 5. 11; *his* (est) 3. 3; 5. 3; 17. 4; 22. 20; *hoð* 5. 34. 36; *a-e* 26. 72; *-as* 5. 33; *hefalsap* 9. 3; *-adum* 27. 39; *hefalsunge* 15. 19. I omit, as less important, the frequent cases where *h* is inorganic, or wanting, before consonants. For the 'V. Ps.,' cf. Zeuner, p. 84; for 'Corpus,' Dieter, p. 66.